Notes On Library Bilding.

The following notes on Library Bilding are sent to anticipate frequent requests for such information.

Frequently library committees, in small towns especially, are composed of busy men who hav not had time to obtain a knowledge of the subject, a bilding plan sometimes attracting them which experience would prove to yield a poor return in useful accommodation for the money.

Architects are liable, unconsciously, no dout, to aim at an architectural feature and subordinate useful accommodation.

The amount allowd by Mr. Carnegie to cover the cost of a Library Bilding is according to a standard based on (a) the population which is to pay the tax for carrying on the library, and (b) a specified minimum revenue from such tax. The donation is only sufficient to provide needed accommodation and there will be either a shortage of accommodation or of money if this primary purpose is not kept in view; viz., TO OBTAIN THE UTMOST USEFUL ACCOMMODATION FOR THE MONEY, CONSISTENT WITH GOOD TASTE IN BILDING.

In looking over hundreds of plans for small and medium sized bildings costing, say, from eight to twenty-five thousand dollars, we hav noted some features leading to waste of space, when useful accommodation mite hav been secured by the same expenditure.

For instance, in a plan for a $10,000 Library Bilding into which the people go by ones, twos and threes, we hav frequently seen a wide vestibule of 12, 16 or even 18 feet, which results in what amounts often to a "thorofare" of that width to the delivery desk, which in a square bilding mite be 20 ft. and upwards from the entrance. It would appear, if practical requirements hav any bearing on the matter, that an entrance hall or vestibule half that width is ample, with corresponding gain in the interior. As the size of the bilding increases, some modification of course is required.

The economical layout of the bilding in this and other respects is sacrificed or subordinated at times to minor accessories such as too much or too valuable space allotted to cloak rooms, toilets, stairs to basement or cellar, etc.

Another caus of waste space in this direction is when parties attemt to get a Greek temple, or modification of it, for $10,000. and all they get is the entrance, and the waste referd to.

The bilding is expected to be devoted exclusivly to (a) housing the books and handing them out, (b) comfortable accommodation for reading them by adults and children, (c) lecture room, when introduced as a subordinate feature and not adding disproportionately to the cost of the bilding, (d) necessary accommodation for heating plant, etc., without which the bilding could not be used.

Experience seems to show that the best results for a small general library are obtaind by adopting the one-story and high-basement type of bilding, of which the depth (from front to back) is to the width approximately as 2 is to 5½ or 3 is to 7, consisting of practically a small vestibule entering one large room sub-divided by book cases into reading spaces for adults and for children.

The rear and side windows may be kept seven feet from floor permitting continuous wall space for shelving which will be sufficient for the volumes in a small community. For larger communities in the range under notis, a small stack-room, when required, can be bilt on the rear equal to about one-third the width of main bilding giving an inverted T plan. This stack extension may be enlarged when future needs demand it, at a minimum expense and without disturbing the bilding or the activities carried on within it.

The type of bilding in view gives the advantage of minimum waste of passage space between entrance and delivery desk placed in front of a space for librarian's office, between desk and stackroom, and allows two large well-lited rooms or spaces on either side of the passage way, in which readers are undisturbd, and from the shape of the rooms most of the readers will be out of hearing of passage traffic and delivery-desk conversations.

The delivery-desk should be as close as possible to the front and placed so as to supervise from it as much of the floor as possible.

The high-basement type of bilding lends itself to advantageous arrangement. The basement may be devoted in part to heating plant, fuel, toilets, work-room and storage, and the rest to a lecture room where such is wanted. When a stack-room is provided above, the basement beneath it may contain heating plant, etc. and the front basement a lecture-room.

Altho these notes are written with the smaller bildings in mind, those larger require only a modification of these fundamental ideas, and no modification of the primary purpose to be aimd at.

Bilding libraries to pattern would be undesirable, but it is desirable in planning to hav a plan in mind which is convenient in arrangement, economical in construction, and into the exterior appearance of which a large variety may be introduced.